

Working in partnership with
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to create the conditions for
health

Public Health Bytes

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PANDEMIC ALERT PHASE: 3 **Communicable Diseases Update:** *Vaccine Preventable Diseases – Pertussis* - Henrico Health District has investigated two pertussis cases in the past two months. Please report suspected or confirmed cases of pertussis to the health department within 24 hours of diagnosis by the most rapid means available; by phone (501-5216) or fax (501-4232). Updated prophylaxis and treatment information is available at: www.publichealthbytes.org under “Pertussis Resources.” *Varicella* - School is back in session and cases of chickenpox have already been identified in a west end elementary school. Varicella is a reportable disease. Please be sure to include information about the patient’s rash severity, fever, and prior varicella vaccination. *Mumps* - Two probable mumps cases were recently reported in UVa students. We are currently evaluating a possible case in Henrico and ask providers to consider the diagnosis and report suspected cases. Case definition and diagnostic testing advice is also available on the public health bytes website under “Mumps Outbreak Resources.” *West Nile Virus (WNV)/Arboviral diseases* – Arboviral activity has been higher in Northern Virginia this season, but slow to infect mosquito populations in the Richmond area. To date, WNV+ positive mosquito pools have been identified in four Henrico County zip codes: 23150, 23226, 23228 and 23229. No additional zip codes have been added to this list since the last edition of PHB. See: <http://www.co.henrico.va.us/health/westnile.htm>. *Pandemic/Avian Flu Update – Wild bird cases* - Lab results indicate the H5N1 avian influenza virus identified in samples from ducks in Pennsylvania, Montana, and Maryland represents the low pathogenic subtype avian influenza or LPAI. This strain poses NO threat to human health and has been detected several times in other wild birds in North America. *Human Cases* - WHO recently updated case definitions for human infections with influenza H5N1 (see <http://www.who.int/en/>). As a result of the new definitions, cases from 2005 were retrospectively added to the case count for Indonesia and Iraq. New cases were reported in Thailand (1) and Indonesia (2) this past month, bringing the total number of human H5N1 cases for 2006 to 104, of which 69 were fatal. *Seasonal Influenza Update* - Influenza cases are already being reported in Henrico. Lab confirmed cases of influenza should be reported to the health department weekly on an Epi-1 form (fax 501-4232) as number of cases only. Please report the type of influenza if it is available, as well as a tally by patient’s zip codes, and the time frame, e.g., week of 10/16/06. Special thanks to New Market Medical Center and Altius Family and Sports Medicine for agreeing to participate in sentinel flu surveillance! Other medical practices interested in participating should contact Rebecca Early as soon as possible at 501-5216.

Emergency Preparedness: *Test of the county’s mass dispensing plan* - Henrico County will be conducting a test of the emergency plan for providing prophylaxis to the population in response to a natural disease outbreak or bioterror event. During the exercise, we will be dispensing the seasonal influenza vaccine at two off-site locations simultaneously in a high thru-put fashion. This exercise will help us evaluate our plans for crowd/traffic control, site security, vaccine cold-chain management, communication, integration of volunteers, and inter-agency coordination. We will be asking for support from the public to make this exercise a success, and, as an incentive to participate, we will be providing the vaccine to participants free of charge during this one-time only event. The exercise will be held Saturday, Nov 4th. Medical Reserve Corps members are invited to participate. Please contact Mike Magner at Michael.Magner@vdh.virginia.gov or 501-7250.

Environmental Health: *Food related - E. coli and Spinach update:* No cases of the outbreak strain *E. coli* O157:H7 have been identified in Henrico at this time. Two cases have been identified in Virginia. A total of 183 persons infected with the outbreak strain of *E. coli* O157:H7 have been reported to CDC from 26 states, including 95 hospitalizations and one death. According to the FDA, consumers are advised not to purchase or consume fresh spinach if they cannot confirm it was grown in areas other than the three California counties implicated in the outbreak: Monterey, San Benito, and Santa Clara. Frozen and canned spinach have not been implicated in the outbreak. For information about the outbreak, refer to publications from CDC and the FDA, respectively: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm55d926.pdf> and <http://www.fda.gov>. *Botulism* – Unrefrigerated carrot juice has been implicated as the source of botulism in Georgia. Additional information is available at: <http://www.fda.gov/bbs/topics/NEWS/2006/NEW01454.html>.

Prevention Update: *Zostavax®* - Earlier this year, FDA approved a new zoster vaccine. This vaccine is indicated for individual 60 years old or older as a measure to prevent herpes zoster. Each dose contains at least 19,400 PFU (plaque forming units) of a live, attenuated varicella-zoster virus (VZV) as compared to varicella virus vaccine (Varivax®) which contains greater than 1,350 plaque forming units (PFUs). Zostavax® is not indicated for the treatment of zoster or postherpetic neuralgia (PHN). Zostavax® was not studied in individuals who had previously experienced zoster and is contraindicated in patients who are pregnant, immunocompromised, or with a history of anaphylaxis to gelatin, neomycin or other vaccine components. A vaccine information sheet (VIS) is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/publications/VIS/vis-shingles.pdf>. *HPV Vaccine Interim VIS* is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/publications/VIS/vis-hpv.pdf>.

Save the date! LATINO HEALTH SUMMIT: *Latino Cultures and Beliefs in Health Care* - November 16–17, 2006 Richmond, Virginia. See www.cmeregistration.som.vcu.edu to register and for further information.

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